



New Inspection and Maintenance Program Design Frequently Asked Questions

Air Pollution Control Program fact sheet

6/2006

Why does St. Louis need an Inspection and Maintenance Program (also known as a vehicle emissions testing program)?

The counties of St. Charles, St. Louis, Franklin, Jefferson, and St. Louis City have been designated as a Federal Non-Attainment Area because they do not meet the federal health-based air quality standards for ground-level ozone, a strong lung irritant. As a result, the State is required to submit a plan to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency by June 2007 detailing how the non-attainment area will come into compliance with this standard. Because of the level of non-attainment in this area, the state of Missouri is required by the federal government to continue implementing a federally approved vehicle emissions testing program as part of this plan.

Do vehicle emissions testing programs really improve air quality?

Motor vehicles are one of the largest sources of these ozone-forming compounds. Inspection and Maintenance programs are designed to help achieve the air quality improvements necessary to attain the federal health-based standards for ozone. The goal of the St. Louis program is to reduce one type of emissions, hydrocarbons, that combine with oxides of nitrogen to form ozone.

How does the department plan to modify the vehicle emissions testing program?

The current contract between Missouri and the vehicle emissions testing provider expires in 2007. Responding to public criticism of the current program, the Department of Natural Resources and area legislators are reviewing modifications to the program which would make it more convenient and user friendly, while maintaining improvements to air quality in the nonattainment area.

Over the past several months, the department has reviewed possible program designs with stakeholders through the Inspection and Maintenance (I/M) Summit. The I/M Summit's general consensus was to begin a decentralized emissions testing program in late 2007. "Decentralized" means local automotive service shops would perform the testing rather than a centralized contractor. Another modification being considered is the combining of emissions testing and vehicle inspection.

For more information on the I/M Summit visit www.dnr.mo.gov/env/apcp/SIPWORKGRP/SipGrpmain.htm#IM.

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Who has input into the design of the new emissions testing program?

The I/M Summit participants included St. Louis community leaders and members of industry groups, environmental groups, the automotive sales and service industry, other affected state agencies and state legislators who previously sponsored or cosponsored legislation to change the emissions testing program.

As the Department of Natural Resources moves forward with developing a new vehicle emissions testing program, there will also be many opportunities for public comment on the proposed new program design.

What are the next steps in modifying the program?

Because the components of the current program are specifically set out in state statute, the department and area legislators must pass new legislation to modify the program. If new legislation is not enacted prior to the current contract's expiration date in 2007, the state will be forced to continue the current program.

For more information call or write:

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